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Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

List of issues and questions in relation to the combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of Lebanon

Addendum

Replies of Lebanon**

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Constitutional and legislative framework

1. Concerning the Committee's question as to whether Lebanon is taking steps to amend its constitution and/or to adopt legislation prohibiting discrimination against women and guaranteeing equality on the basis of sex in line with articles 1 and 2 (a) of the Convention, the Lebanese Constitution does not discriminate on the basis of sex. Its preamble provides for "equality and rights and duties among all citizens, without discrimination or preference". Article 7 of the Constitution states, "All Lebanese are equal before the law. They shall enjoy equal civil and political rights and bear equally public obligations and duties without distinction among them." Article 12 of the Constitution states, "Every Lebanese shall have the right to hold public office, with no advantage to one person over another, except on the basis of merit and aptitude." Therefore, the Lebanese Government is currently not involved in taking steps to amend the Constitution.

Concerning legislation, when the Lebanese Government amends certain laws, it makes efforts to guarantee gender equality. Lebanon's periodic reports refer to many examples of such efforts, particularly its second periodic report (2004). See also Lebanon's combined fourth and fifth periodic reports due in 2014 (CEDAW/C/LBN/Q/4-5) in reference to article 15 of the Convention ("Equality before the Law", section I) as well as paragraphs 8, 181.8.

Concerning constitutional guarantees of the prerogative to challenge any laws incompatible the Constitution and Lebanon's international obligations, Lebanon previously covered – in its second periodic report (2004) under the heading "General legal framework for the protection of human rights" – the relevant constitutional provisions and constitutional oversight of laws, which is the responsibility of the Constitutional Council established under Constitutional Law No. 18 of 21 September 1990 (which amends article 19 of the Constitution). Lebanon's second periodic report affirms that the Constitutional Council is of the firm judgment that international conventions, which are explicitly covered by the preamble of the Constitution, enjoy constitutional force, whereby the violation of such conventions is subject to constitutional oversight. While this constitutional situation has not changed, it should be noted that the President of the Republic, Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies, Prime Minister or a group of 10 members of the Chamber of Deputies are each entitled to consult the Constitutional Council concerning the constitutionality of laws. In addition, the leaders of legally recognized confessional communities are also entitled to consult the Constitutional Council in connection with matters of personal status, freedom of belief, the practice of religious rites and freedom of religious education (article 19 (amended) of the Constitution).

2. Law No. 293 on the Protection of Women and Other Family Members from Domestic Violence was passed and entered into force in May 2014. The law repeals article 562 of the Penal Code and amends a number of provisions of Penal Code. Some of these amendments are mentioned below in response to the "List of issues and questions in relation to the combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of Lebanon" (hereinafter "List of questions and issues"), paragraph 8, which concerns violence against women. The legislature has also adopted other amendments to strengthen penalties, particularly in domestic offenses, including the following:

- Article 518 of the Penal Code was amended to read as follows: "Any person who compels a minor under age 18 to beg shall be punished by imprisonment

of 6-24 months and a fine ranging from the equivalent of the minimum wage to double the minimum wage".

- Article 523 of the Penal Code was amended to read as follows: "Any person who abets, facilitates, or aids the lewdness or corruption one or more persons, male or female, below the age of 11 shall be punished by imprisonment of 1-12 months and a fine ranging from the minimum wage to three times the minimum wage". Article 529 of the Penal Code, which concerns the offenders mentioned in article 506 of the code, strengthens the penalty pursuant to article 257 of the code if the offense is committed within the family regardless of the age of the victim of the offense.

- Article 527 of the Penal Code was amended to read as follows: "Any person who depends, for all or a portion of his livelihood, on the prostituting of another person shall be punished by imprisonment of 6-24 months and a fine ranging from the minimum wage to double the minimum wage". Article 529 of the Penal Code, which concern the offenders mentioned in article 506 of the code, strengthens the penalty pursuant to article 257 of the code if the offense is committed within the family. The penalty is doubled if the offense is accompanied by any form of violence or threat.

- Regarding the criminalization of marital rape, article 503 of the Penal Code previously excluded the husband as a perpetrator of the act of "forcing a spouse to engage in intercourse". However, under Law No. 293 on the Protection of Women and Other Family Members from Domestic Violence, article 3 (7) (a) and (b), it is a crime for one to use violence against or threaten one's spouse with the intent of exacting matrimonial rights to intercourse. The new provision is as follows:

    - "Article 3 (7) (a): Any person who – with the intent of exacting his marital rights to intercourse, or because of his exaction of such rights – beats or harms his spouse shall be punished by one of the penalties stipulated in articles 554-559 of the Penal Code. If the offense is repeated, the penalty shall be increased pursuant to article 257 of the Penal Code. If the complainant drops the charge, the claim of a general right shall lapse in respect of claims to which articles 554 and 555 of the Penal Code apply. The provisions observed in respect of repeat cases or habitual criminality shall remain in effect if the conditions thereof are met".

    - "Article 3 (7) (b): Any person who – with the intent of exacting his marital rights to intercourse, or because of his exaction of such rights – threatens his spouse shall be punished by one of the penalties stipulated in articles 573-578 of the Penal Code. In the case of a repeated threat, the penalty shall be increased pursuant to article 257 of the Penal Code. If the complainant drops the charge, the claim of a general right shall lapse in respect of claims to which articles 554 and 555 of the Penal Code apply. The provisions observed in respect of repeat cases or habitual criminality shall remain in effect if the conditions thereof are met".

- The discriminatory provisions in the Social Security Law and Commerce Law, to which paragraphs 182 and 186 the report (CEDAW/C/LBN/4-5) refer, have not been amended.

Women refugees and asylum seekers

3. Regarding the regulations in force for dealing with refugees who arrive in Lebanon from the Syrian Arab Republic, the Council of Ministers discussed the migration of persons from Syria to Lebanon on 23 May 2014 and decided in Decree No. 72 to:

a. Form a ministerial cell chaired by the Prime Minister to follow up various aspects of Syrians displaced to Lebanon. The Committee's members include the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Expatriates, Minister for Interior and Municipalities and Minister for Social Affairs. The Committee has adopts recommendations to cope with the flow of immigrants in coordination with various departments. In particular, it has:

- assigned the Minister for Interior and Municipalities to regulate the migration process according to international standards to ensure the safe return of migrants to their country of origin.
- assigned the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Expatriates to make efforts to establish safe camps in Syria or in the area of the Lebanese-Syrian border in cooperation with concerned international, regional and local agencies and bodies.
- assigned the Minister for Social Affairs to define and regulate relations with concerned international, regional and local organizations, adopt appropriate measures to restrict the flow of displaced persons, provide for the needs of displaced persons and strengthen the capacities of the local communities that are hosting displaced persons.

b. On 23 October 2014, the Council of Ministers discussed a policy paper on Syrian migration to Lebanon submitted by the ministerial cell. The paper covers measures for the reduction of migration, regulation of relationships with international institutions in this regard, the security forces' follow up on the implementation of measures to control migration, assignment of the municipalities to conduct periodic surveys of displaced persons within their jurisdictions, intensified application of Lebanese laws to Syrian displaced persons to protect Lebanese labour, and the balanced provision of assistance to displaced persons and host communities. The Council of Ministers approved the report in its Decree No. 38.

The General Directorate of General Security has adopted measures to enable persons displaced from Syria to Lebanon to obtain annual residency based on identification certificates issued by the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees Affairs without the need for a Lebanese sponsor. Due to the current circumstances in Syria, the General Directorate of General Security does not deport any Syrian from Lebanon.

Data and information on refugees: The General Directorate of General Security lacks comprehensive, precise statistics on the number of male and female Palestinian refugees displaced from Syria to Lebanon. However, the data available

from the Ministry of Social Affairs' Programme to Respond to the Syrian Situation indicates that Palestinian refugees who have migrated from Syria to Lebanon and are registered with UNWRA totalled approximately 42 000 as of early August 2014. Syrian refugees who have migrated from Syria to Lebanon and are registered with the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees Affairs total 1 183 327 as of 7 May 2015 according to the statistics of that office, disaggregated according to sex as follows:

- 619 540 females (52.4 per cent of the overall total).
- 563 787 males (47.6 per cent of the overall total).

These refugees are geographically distributed as follows:

- 32 548 in Beirut, including 9 826 families.
- 311 985 in Mount Lebanon, including 81 776 families.
- 282 728 in northern Lebanon, including 71 666 families.
- 415 803 persons, including 94 386 families.
- 139 263 in southern Lebanon, including 31 742 families.

Regarding the measures taken to protect refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls from gender-based violence, including sexual violence, and to protect refugee girls from child and forced marriage, the Lebanese Government, in its response to the Syrian crisis, has promoted the activity of all relevant ministries with a view toward coordinating among them and with United Nations agencies and international and local organizations to provide vulnerable persons with the most urgent services. Initiatives and efforts undertaken to date for such groups – particularly women, girls and boys – focus on the following risks: psychological and social harassment, early marriage, trafficking in persons, child labour, domestic violence, children with disabilities and unaccompanied children separated from their families. In this connection:

- Approximately 70 safe points have been established to help persons rescued from gender-based violence and sexual violence and to help women and girls vulnerable to such violence obtain legal and medical services and emotional support and achieve economic and social empowerment. Approximately 130 women and girls, 40 per cent of them below the age of 18, have benefited from these services.
- A work team comprising 2100 persons was trained in basic concepts of gender-based violence, channels for referrals, and dealing with the detection and reporting of violence without causing further harm to victims.
- Action was taken to develop protocols and a set of tools for measuring care quality in all sectors (health, justice, safety, security and psychological and social support).

The General Directorate of General Security, based on the "Safe House" memorandum of understanding signed with the Caritas confederation (mentioned in CEDAW/C/LBN/4-5, paragraphs 94.3 and 94.5), protects women and children who are vulnerable to violence and assault. Representatives of the confederation are present at the General Security Administration to provide medical and social assistance and to follow up cases of women and child victims.

Regarding the measures taken to ensure that the principle of non-refoulement is upheld for women and girls, Lebanon, although it did not sign the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, complies with the principle of non-refoulement of refugees. The General Directorate of General Security does not deport persons whom it believes will be subjected to danger, violence or threat in their countries.

Regarding the situation of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, such refugees enjoy special status that distinguishes them completely from other groups. They obtain identity documents enabling them to move throughout Lebanon from the Directorate General of Political and Refugee Affairs, and they obtain travel documents for travel abroad from the General Directorate of General Security.

Access to justice

4. Regarding the Committee's request to provide information on obstacles faced by women, including disadvantaged groups of women, to gaining access to justice, there is no definition of disadvantaged groups of women or men in Lebanese law. Access to civil and criminal courts is available to all. This right is entrenched in the Constitution (particularly article 8 thereof) and in the Code of Civil Procedure, particularly article 7 thereof, which entitles a Lebanese or foreigner to litigate without gender discrimination. The Public Prosecutor, upon receiving knowledge of a criminal offense, acts automatically through the means provided in the Code of Criminal Procedure. Articles 425-441 of the Code of Civil Procedure are dedicated to the provision of legal assistance to facilitate access to the judiciary by any person who is unable to pay judicial fees and expenses. The Code of Criminal Procedure provides for the appointment of an attorney for an accused person. A number of articles cover an accused person who is financially unable to appoint an attorney or who rejects the appointment of a defence attorney. The State's commitment to the absence of discrimination against women in all courts is embodied in the State's ability to have recourse to judicial inspection and to hold judges' actions accountable through the General Panel of the Court of Cassation and the latter's oversight of petitions for the appointment of a competent authority in the event of a positive or negative dispute over:

- jurisdiction between a judicial court and a sharia or confessional court.
- jurisdiction between a sharia court and a confessional court.
- Jurisdiction between two different confessional courts or between two different sharia courts.
- the authority to object to a decision issued by a confessional or sharia court due to that court's lack of jurisdiction or its violation of substantive formula pertaining to public order.
- the authority of the Public Prosecutor to petition the Court of Cassation to cassate judgments for the benefit of the law.

Concerning the submission of information on measures to ensure that women have effective access to justice and reparations, particularly in cases of domestic violence, Law No. 293 of 7 May 2014 on the Protection of Women and Other Family Members from Domestic Violence provides for an integrated legal system to enable battered women and any other battered family member to file a complaint

with the judiciary. One or more public attorneys in the governorate are assigned to receive and prosecute complaints relating to domestic violence incidents. A specialized domestic violence unit has been established in the Directorate General of the Internal Security Forces. It performs the functions of the judicial police in handling and referring complaints according to the law. In addition, the competent authorities (magistrate judge or summary matters judge) may issue orders to protect a battered woman and her children.

As to whether Lebanon is considering establishing a state-sponsored legal aid programme, the Ministry of Justice has no documented information in this regard.

Concerning the establishment of a national human rights commission, no new developments have occurred regarding the proposed law mentioned in CEDAW/C/LBN/4-5. For more information on the content of the law, see the attached copy of the law (Annex 1).

National machinery for the advancement of women

5. The National Commission for Lebanese Women (NCLW) and other actors involved in women's issues in Lebanese society work to achieve strategic objectives. For this purpose, the NCLW has cooperated with its partners to develop a plan to implement a strategy covering 2013-2016. The NCLW monitors and evaluates implementation of activities for this purpose through electronic forms that are sent to all civil-society and ministerial partners participating in the plan. The NCLW is currently preparing its first annual report on the activities and initiatives it implemented in Lebanon under the plan during 2013. The report will delineate future directions for more effective initiatives to achieve the strategic objectives.

There are no new legal or regulatory measures for promoting the authorities and capacities of the NCLW to enable it to fulfil its mandate. However, government institutions have been more open to cooperating with the NCLW. The NCLW has strengthened its cooperation in the field with the agencies of the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers and Office of the Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies. The NCLW is invited to present its view on draft laws under discussion – including the Law on Combating of Domestic Violence against Women, General Elections Law and other draft laws – before the laws are passed. Concerning the draft General Elections Law, which has yet to be passed, the NCLW was invited to participate in deliberations on a formula for promoting the participation of women in elections as candidates. The network of gender focal points provides an advanced format for building closer relationships with public institutions and ministries. The NCLW has focused recently on training workshops and the establishment of gender focal points in the ministries.

As for the Department of Women's Affairs of the Ministry of Social Affairs, its functions – under article 37 of Decree No. 5734 of 29 September 1994 (regulation of the ministry of social affairs, specification of its staff positions, and special requirements for appointment to certain positions in the ministry) – include: studying women's issues from all standpoints to improve women's conditions; coordinating government relations with various Arab, international and national institutions concerned with women; supporting the efforts of activists of the Lebanese women's movement on different levels; developing executive programmes; and tracking approval of international recommendations issued by the United Nations and its specialized agencies concerning women's issues and various

proposed laws and regulations required for this purpose (a copy of Decree No. 5734 is attached in Annex 2). The Ministry of Social Affairs appointed the female head of the Department of Women's Affairs to serve as the gender focal point with the NCLW to increase coordination and strengthen cooperation between the ministry and the NCLW. The NCLW performs advisory functions for the Office of the Prime Minister and other public departments and institutions. These functions include providing opinions and remarks and proposing integrated plans to the Government to achieve the objectives for which the NCLW was established. The NCLW also performs liaison, coordination, and executive functions (see the Law Establishing the NCLW in Annex 3).

Temporary special measures

6. In addition to what is stated in CEDAW/C/LBN/4-5, efforts continue to include a quota for women in the new draft parliamentary elections law. Regarding measures to provide economic incentives to women, on 9 May 2011, the Bank of Lebanon Governorship Board licensed the NCLW as a small loans institution. This permits banks to grant, through the NCLW, small loans to women at very low interest that covers only the bank's cost of managing the loan. This is possible because the bank of Lebanon treats such loans as part of the compulsory reserve which banks must deposit with the Bank of Lebanon, for which the banks receive no interest.

Stereotypes

7. The Lebanese Constitution, article 9, authorizes the Lebanese confessional groups to regulate the domestic affairs of their communities. Therefore, the State lacks a clear, direct gateway to providing family life education. The family exercises the greatest influence in the formation or expansion of gender identities, including the stereotyping of social and domestic roles. The concerned ministries and official departments adopt a gender approach for development in their policies and strategies. The NCLW and the Department of Women's Affairs in the Ministry of Social Affairs partner with nongovernmental organizations and collaborate in implementing their programmes to counter gender stereotypes. Key programmes include training in gender sensitivity for professional groups, media and human rights workers, youth, military and security personnel, students, etc. in various government and nongovernmental institutions throughout the Republic of Lebanon.

Violence against women

8. Statistics on female homicide victims are not aggregated according to location and perpetrator (relative of the victim or a stranger). It is thus not possible to provide precise statistics on offenses involving the killing of women in domestic contexts according to kinship tie (blood or marriage). However, a review of media publications provides an idea of the number of women killed in domestic contexts during May 2010 – February 2014, as follows:

Year	May 2010	2011	2012	2013	Feb 2014
Number	6	6	3	9	3

Thus, 27 homicides involving female victims occurred over a 46-month period (0.58 homicides reported each month). The husband was the perpetrator in

70 per cent of the homicides. In 22 per cent of the cases, the accused were blood relatives of the victim (father, brother or son).

The Ministry of Social Affairs cooperates with the concerned nongovernmental organizations to provide shelter to women victims of domestic violence based on annual contracts concluded with these organizations according to specific standards and rules. The services provided by these organizations include intake, sheltering, health and medical care, social, psychological and occupational rehabilitation programmes and preparation for integration in society. These organizations run six centres. Five are located in Mount Lebanon and one is located in the Bekaa Valley. There is also an outpatient centre in the governorate of Mount Lebanon for the intake, rehabilitation and social reintegration of female victims of prostitution and females released from prison. There are two centres in Beirut for the outpatient care and rehabilitation of male and female drug addicts.

The ministry is currently working in partnership with an international organization and in cooperation with a nongovernmental organization to establish model centres under the Ministry of Social Affairs in seven Lebanese governorates. The centres are selected according to their adherence to announced regulatory, administrative, and specialized care standards and gender-sensitive standards and ethics embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. They serve as spaces for women and girls who are vulnerable to gender-based risk and violence. The centres provide them with safe places and protective services and respond to their needs.

9. Concerning the draft Law on the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence:

a. The Chamber of Deputies, in a public session on 1 April 2014, passed a draft Law to Protect Women from Domestic Violence, as amended by the joint parliamentary committees. The law was promulgated as Law No. 293 of 7 May 2014 on the Protection of Women and Other Family Members from Domestic Violence (Official Gazette No. 21 of 15 May 2014) (see Annex 4). The name of the law was a key amendment incorporated in the draft submitted to the Chamber of Deputies by the National Alliance to Legislate a Law to Protect Women from Domestic Violence. Under article 2 of the law, family members include "either spouse; the father and mother of either spouse; siblings; legitimate and illegitimate ascendants and descendants; any persons connected by adoption, relationship by marriage to the second degree, guardianship, wardship or orphan sponsorship; spouse of the mother; or spouse of the father".

b. Article 2 of the aforesaid law defines "domestic violence" as "any act, refrainment from acting, or threat committed by a family member against one or more family members – as defined in the definition of the family – that entails an offense stipulated in this law and results in homicide or physical, psychological, sexual or economic harm".

c. Article 562 of the Penal Code was repealed in August 2011. That article had provided for a more lenient sentence for a person who kills his wife or a blood relative upon surprising them engaging in the offense of adultery or illegal sexual intercourse in flagrante delicto. The new law

does not distinguish this offense from ordinary offenses. Moreover, it strengthens the punishment for a perpetrator of domestic violence and places both sexes on an equal par in multiple articles:

- Article 547 of the Penal Code was amended to read as follows: "Any person who kills a human being intentionally shall be punished by hard labour of 15-20 years. The punishment shall be 20-25 years if the act of homicide is committed by one spouse against the other".
- Articles 487, 488, and 489 of the Penal Code were amended to read as follows:
  - New article 487: "Adultery committed by either of the two spouses shall be punished by imprisonment of 3-24 months. The same punishment shall be imposed on the partner to the adultery if the partner is married; otherwise the partner shall be punished by imprisonment of 1-12 months".
  - New article 488: "Either spouse shall be punished by imprisonment of 1-12 months if the spouse openly takes for himself/herself a lover in any place".
  - New article 489:
    - "The act of adultery may not be prosecuted except on the basis of a complaint lodged by one of the spouses, who must also act as a personal plaintiff.
    - "Neither the partner nor the accomplice shall be prosecuted except in conjunction with the adulterer.
    - "A complaint from a spouse who consented to his/her spouse's commission of adultery shall be inadmissible.
    - "A complaint lodged after the passage of three months from the day the offense came to the knowledge of the plaintiff shall be inadmissible.
    - "If a claim against the adulterer is dropped, the public claim and personal claims against any other accused persons in the offense shall be dropped.
    - "If the plaintiff consents to the resumption of marital life, the complaint shall be dropped."

d. Article 503 of the Penal Code previously excluded the husband as a perpetrator of the act of "forcing a spouse to engage in intercourse". However, Law No. 293 on the Protection of Women and Other Family Members from Domestic Violence, article 3 (7) (a) and (b), makes it a crime for a person to use violence against, or threaten, his spouse with the intent of exacting matrimonial rights to intercourse.

e. The judiciary began to apply the Law on the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence as soon as the law was published in the Official Gazette. Several days after the law was published, the summary matters judge in Beirut relied on the law to issue Decision [5]39/2014 of

31 May 2014. As of 31 December 2014, 36 decisions based on the law were handed down by eleven male and four female summary matters judges in various regions of the Republic of Lebanon. In addition, 30 protective orders have been issued pursuant to the law (six petitions for protective orders have been denied), and 30 men (including 27 spouses, one brother, and one father of female complainants and one unidentified person) were charged, convicted and sentenced to imprisonment, fines, damages for medical costs incurred by the victim, payment of periodic income to battered women, injunctions to stay away from a woman and her children, psycho-social rehabilitation, etc. Notably, several judges based their decisions not only on Law 293 but also on the Convention and the Declaration of Human Rights. Nongovernmental human rights organizations documented these judgments and published them in traditional and new media, highlighting the judges' interpretation of the articles of Law 293. The judgments clearly show an unequivocal intolerance for physical violence and other forms of abuse, particularly psychological, economic, and sexual abuse. Three decisions require the convicted perpetrators to submit to rehabilitation for periods that are subject to change based on the recommendation of the rehabilitation specialist.

Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution

10 and 11. Law No. 164 of 2011 on Punishment of Human Trafficking Offenses (24 August 2011) is a new law. The penal and protective provisions of the law may be strengthened in the light of and through enforcement. The following has been undertaken in this regard:

- Protective provisions of the law: In implementation of the provisions of the law and Executive Decree No. 9082 of 10 October 2012 (which establishes the requirements for contracting with institutions and associations that assist and protect human trafficking victims and which establishes the rules for the provision of assistance), the Minister for Justice concluded an agreement with the Caratis confederation on 26 January 2015. The agreement entered into effect on 1 February 2015. It requires Caratis to conduct intake and sheltering of victims in specialized centres and to provide them with health, psychological and social care and legal advice and assistance to enable them to obtain their rights before the judiciary.
- Under Decree No. 77 of 2 October 2014, the name of the Office for the Protection of Morals in the Directorate General of the Internal Security Forces was changed to the Office for Combating Human Trafficking and Protecting Morals. The office was also charged with the additional mission of combating human trafficking offenses. Annex 5 attached to this report contains the following statistical tables issued by the Directorate General of the Internal Security Forces:
    - o Number of human trafficking victims and offenders according to year.
    - o Number of human trafficking victims and offenders according to nationality.

- Number of minors among human trafficking victims.
- Human trafficking cases in 2015.
- Monthly statistics on arrests made by the Office for Combating Human Trafficking and Protecting Morals in 2015.
- Statistics on the nationality of females arrested by the Office for Combating Human Trafficking and Protecting Morals in 2015.
- Summary of human trafficking cases in 2014 and 2015.

– Annex 6 contains a table prepared by the General Directorate of General Security showing the number of probable victims who benefited from the "Safe House" according to nationality and the type and treatment of complaints filed by probable victims in 2014.

Participation in political and public life

12. There have been no new developments concerning laws on women's participation in decision-making posts, particularly senior political posts. However, the Government has made efforts to increase the number of women holding leadership posts in the public administration. In this connection, nine women have been appointed to the post of director general through promotions from grade 2 to grade 1 or through transfers from other cadres, thereby doubling the number of women at grade 1 in public posts.

There are no new developments regarding the draft General Elections Law. The draft has yet to be passed. The NCLW is lobbying and negotiating with Lebanese political circles to introduce special exceptional measures to ensure that women candidates may truly compete than just standing pro forma in elections. The NCLW's efforts include a series of visits made to officials in cooperation with a number of women's civil society organizations active in this area.

The NCLW has increased its efforts to train and enable women wishing to stand for election. It has sought to play a coordinating and catalysing role in creating a common formula that has the agreement of the women's civil society associations and other circles concerned with strengthening women's participation in political life and in particular promoting female candidates.

Regarding the Municipal Elections Law and the effects of the Personal Status Records Registration Law on women's rights to stand in elections (which is mentioned in CEDAW/C/LBN/4-5, paragraph 211.2), there are no new developments. In this regard, the "List of issues and questions", paragraph 12, requests "information on steps being taken to ensure the full implementation of the 20 per cent quota contained in the municipal electoral legislation." This issue does not concern Lebanon, inasmuch as Lebanese law does not provide for any quota in either general or municipal elections.

Nationality

13. There have been no new developments concerning the nationality issue in respect of amending the law or Lebanon's reservation to article 9 (2) of the Convention.

Education

14. A committee has been formed to curb dropping out of school. The committee includes staff of the Educational Centre for Research and Development and professors of the Ministry of Higher Education. The committee is newly formed and has yet to begin its work.

The civics textbooks cover topics relating to gender equality. Textbooks are currently not being reviewed, as efforts are being channelled – in Lebanon's current difficult situation – to the displaced Syrians' urgent educational requirements, which dictate prioritizing action to counter fanaticism and renounce extremism, violence and gender-based violence.

15. The Ministry of Education and Higher Education is cooperating with civil society organizations and the NCLW to implement a project for the "incorporation of gender in the public policy of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education". This cooperation is still in its initial phases with the ministry expected to convene dialogue meetings with the concerned parties to launch a comprehensive vision and outline a plan that specifies gender incorporation priorities and ways of implementing them.

Based on statistics provided in CEDAW/C/LBN/4-5 in connection with article 10 of the Convention, the concerned entities in the Ministry of Education and Higher Education see no need to adopt special measures to encourage girls and boys, either in the capital or suburbs, to transcend gender stereotypes in their educational choices. The State cooperates with civil society organizations in outlying areas in the country to achieve this.

The National Adult Education Programme seeks, with its modest resources, to combat illiteracy among adult men and women through various means. Such means have included the creation of a "life skills" resource package, training in adult education techniques for instructors and the promotion of adult education classes at development service centres throughout Lebanon. National indicators have been developed to measure the quality of literacy programmes together with a programme to evaluate and develop ongoing education services by conducting field studies on willingness to enrol in adult education centres and enrolment incentives. These services add to the basket of State services for the neediest groups of the Lebanese people, particularly in rural areas.

Employment

16. The key new development regarding support for working women is the promulgation of Law No. 266 of 15 April 2014 amending provisions of the Civil Service System and Law No. 267 of 15 April 2014 amending provisions of the Labour Law concerning maternity leave, which has been increased in both the public and private sectors to 10 weeks with full pay (Official Gazette No. 17 of 22 April 2014, page 1119). There are no new developments concerning the other issues mentioned in paragraph 16 of the "List of issues and questions".

Women domestic migrant workers

17 and 18. The Ministry of Labour is in the process of signing memoranda of understanding with several countries that send foreign labourers to Lebanon. Key provisions of the memoranda include the following: there must be a standard written

labour contract between the female domestic worker and employer in Lebanon and between the worker and the recruitment office; the contract must be prepared Arabic, English and official language of the foreign worker's State; and the contract must be certified by that State's embassy or consulate.

Among other things, the contract must set the worker's monthly wage and payment method, work hours and weekly break. It must provide for the worker's round-trip travel ticket and insurance against, and medical care for, occupational diseases and work accidents, and it must specify the labour contract termination date. On 16 July 2014, the ministry referred to the Council of Ministers a draft law for the Government's approval to join International Labour Organisation Convention 189 on Domestic Workers. However, the Council of Ministers has deferred discussion of the matter. In April 2014, the ministry referred a draft law on decent work for domestic workers to the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers, which has yet to submit the draft to the Council of Ministers.

In addition to the preceding, the Ministry of Labour also reports that the following measures have been taken:

1. A guide to the rights and duties of women domestic migrant workers has been completed in a number of languages. It is currently being distributed to female foreign workers upon their arrival at the airport and at the concerned departments in the Ministry of Labour.

2. A hotline has been established in the Ministry of Labour (1740). It operates around the clock and provides service in various languages. Action is being taken to upgrade the hotline according to international standards in coordination with the Caratis confederation and the International Labour Organisation. The special hotline unit is staffed by a full-time employee who receives calls and complaints and refers them immediately to the competent departments to be processed.

3. A number of social workers have been attached to the staff of the Ministry of Labour. They have university degrees in counselling and have been trained and qualified to intervene, provide counselling, raise awareness and solve problems encountered by domestic workers.

4. A special unit in the Ministry of Labour (Department of Inspection, Prevention and Safety) has been assigned to follow up all complaints received by the ministry concerning violations of the rights of female domestic migrant workers and to counsel them regarding the legal and judicial measures that should be taken in such cases.

5. Authorized government agents working in the staff of the Ministry of Labour monitor all legal actions submitted to the labour arbitration councils concerning the rights and claims of female domestic migrant workers. The agents express a legal opinion on each case.

6. Offices engaged in recruiting female domestic migrant workers have been reorganized according to international standards for respect of human rights and the combating of human trafficking. Labour inspectors have stepped up supervision of the activity of these offices to prevent the exploitation and trafficking of female workers.

7. Labour inspectors in the ministry receive training and preparation concerning international labour standards and laws on combating human trafficking.

8. The Ministry of Labour has adopted the method of blacklisting certain employers who mistreat female workers to prevent them from importing and using female workers.

9. Efforts are made to encourage an ongoing, direct dialogue between the Union of Labour Recruitment Offices and the Ministry of Labour. A dialogue conference held on 26 November 2014 produced a number of effective recommendations on the regulation of recruitment offices and protection of female workers' rights.

10. A direct constructive dialogue was initiated with the embassies of labour exporting States. Efforts are currently being made to sign agreements with several such States, particularly those whose citizens are prohibited from working in Lebanon.

11. The role of the National Management Committee established under Government Decree No. 40/2007 of 10 April 2007 is being reactivated. The committee is in the process of reviewing the system currently in effect with a view toward revising it consistent with international standards.

12. Employers are required to obtain mandatory disability insurance policies for foreign wage workers and domestic workers. These policies must provide compensation for permanent total or partial disability in the event a foreign worker is subjected to an accident during his/her work. Employers must cover the expenses of a foreign worker's recuperation in the event of illness or accident during work.

13. The ministry participates actively in all committees concerned with the protection of migrant workers' rights and the combating of human trafficking offenses.

On the question concerning the Ministry of Labour's public rejection of an initiative by the National Federation of Labour Unions to establish a domestic workers union, the Ministry of Labour reports that it is keen to protect women domestic workers' rights, adding that a permit was not issued to the General Union of Cleaning Workers and Social Care in Lebanon because it does not meet the legal requirements stipulated by the Labour Law for obtaining the Ministry for Labour's approval to establish a union.

The General Directorate of General Security reports that it provides women domestic migrant workers, immediately upon their arrival in Lebanon, with booklets explaining their rights and duties and listing contact information of law enforcement agencies and the Lebanese Red Cross.

Health

19. Primary health care centres are located in all regions of Lebanon. In 2014, 28 new centres were added to the network. These centres perform a vital function in serving disadvantaged areas with a high concentration of displaced persons. Private institutions play an active role in managing these centres, 60 per cent of which are affiliated with private institutions.

Distribution of primary health care centres according to governorate

Governorate	Beirut	Mount Lebanon	North	Bekaa	South	Nabatiyah	Total
Number of healthcare centres in 2015	15	56	53	36	30	26	216

Medical facilities in Lebanon in 2015

	Hospitals	Government hospitals	Private hospitals	Dialysis centres
Number as of 2015	1200	30 (+4 under construction)	135	72

In 2014, the Ministry of Public Health launched a programme for the care of pregnant women and new-borns. The programme is designed to improve and assure the quality of services provided to mothers, lower the cost of services required by pregnant women, provide counselling and facilitate obtainment of services and ensure the healthy growth of children up to age two. The programme is being implemented in the Rashaya Government Hospital, Rafiq al-Hariri Government University Hospital, Tripoli Government Hospital, Wadi Khalid Health Care Centre and Sayyida al-Salam Hospital in Halba.

A committee has been formed under the chair of the Ministry of Health Director General to study and document maternal mortality. The Ministry of Public Health is in the process of updating service delivery guidelines for reproductive health services and the training of service providers in the use of such services.

The Primary Health Care Program provides contraceptive means at primary health care centres and at clinics and centres that provide reproductive services to displaced Syrians.

Reduction in childhood and maternal mortality in Lebanon

	2009	2014
Under-five mortality rate per thousand	10	9
Infant mortality rate per thousand births	9	8
Maternal mortality rate per 100 000 live births	23	16

Concerning mental health, in May 2014, the Ministry of Public Health launched the National Mental Health Program with support from the World Health Organization, UNICEF and the International Medical Corps. The programme aims to reform mental health care in Lebanon and provide community-based services that go beyond medical care in line with human rights and the most current scientific evidence to improve interventions. The programme has trained physicians and nurses from 50 primary health care centres in the WHO Mental Health Gap Action Programme (mhGAP) for mental, neurological and substance use disorders in mental health frameworks.

Concerning abortion, there have been no new legislative developments since Lebanon's submission of its previous reports, particularly its second periodic report (2004). Lebanese law (articles 539-546 of the Penal Code) prohibits abortion except in cases of therapeutic abortion. Therapeutic abortions may be performed based on

the conditions and reservations specified in article 32 of Medical Ethics Law No. 288 of 22 February 1994, which are as follows:

- An abortion must be the only means to save a mother whose life is in grave danger.
- The attending physician or surgeon must consult two physicians who perform a medical examination, deliberate, and agree that the mother's life can only be saved through an abortion. The pregnant woman must consent to the abortion after having been informed of her condition. If she is unconscious or in serious danger, and the therapeutic abortion is necessary to save her life, the physician must perform the abortion despite the objection of her husband or her relatives.

No statistics are available on abortions performed in private clinics or homes, which are an unsafe environment. Statistics are available to the Ministry of Health only from hospitals. A sample of statistics for 2012 is attached to this report (Annex 7).

Marriage and family relations

20. The bill to regulate optional civil marriage in Lebanon was submitted by the former Minister for Justice to the Presidency of the Council of Ministers on 18 January 2014. On 27 February 2014, the current government, after it was formed, returned the bill to the Ministry of Justice for submission to the new minister, which is procedure followed in matters that have not yet been submitted to the Council of Ministers. The bill remains with the Ministry of Justice as of the date of the present report. There have been no new developments regarding the proposed law mentioned in paragraph 203.2 of CEDAW/C/LBN/Q/4-5 concerning a civil personal status code. The efforts envisaged to ensure that Lebanese women and men who belong to any sect are able to conclude a civil marriage in the Lebanon are floundering due to the current situation.

There are no new developments regarding the steps taken by Lebanon to withdraw its reservations to article 16 (1) (c), (d), (f) and (g) of the Convention (concerning marriage and family relations), inasmuch as the matter pertains to the upholding of the personal statuses guaranteed by article 9 of the Constitution for the Lebanese confessional groups in the absence of a consolidated personal status law or family law.

21. Regarding child marriage and data indicating that child marriage rates are higher in rural areas than in other areas, key initiatives have been undertaken to limit this practice. In 2014, the NCLW organized a campaign with the participation of civil society institutions and organizations. The campaign included a study on childhood marriage, which the NCLW followed up by preparing a proposed law subjecting the marriage of minors to the prior authorization of a juvenile judge under the heading of the State's duty to protect minors. Article 4 of the proposed law requires the judge, before making a proper decision, to order a social work investigation and to hear the minor, one or both of the minor's parents, the minor's legal guardian, or the persons responsible for the minor and to hear the person seeking marriage or whomever that person deems appropriate.

On 29 September 2014, the proposed law was submitted to parliament and registered under No. 30/2014. On 14 October 2014, it was adopted by the

Parliamentary Human Rights Committee. It is currently being studied in the concerned parliamentary committees (see Annex 8 for the text of the proposed law).

Optional protocol and amendment to article 20 (1) of the Convention

22. Lebanon's refrainment from ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Convention goes back to 2002 when the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers requested the opinion of the Legislation and Consultation Commission in the Ministry of Justice on the matter. The NCLW stated in its opinion, which was approved by the director general of the Ministry of Justice at the time, that "it deems it appropriate to refrain from signing the protocol and in all cases for Lebanon to declare that it does not recognize, as provided in article 10 of the Protocol, the competence of the Committee to designate one or more of its members to conduct an inquiry and that Lebanon would not take into account, in response to such an inquiry, the measures recommended by the Committee". Accordingly, there is no change in Lebanon's position on this matter.

Regarding Lebanon's position on the amendment of article 20 (1) of the Convention, the opinion of the Legal Consultations, Research and Documentation Centre in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the matter was obtained. The centre concludes that "there is no legal impediment to ratification of the amendment after the Ministry of Justice's opinion is obtained in preparation for initiating legal measures for ratification". There is thus no change in Lebanon's position on this matter.

Finally, the Committee requested judicial information regarding the following three issues:

- Violence against women (paragraph 8 of the "List of issues and questions"): the convictions and sentences imposed in offenses involving the killing of women.
- Trafficking and exploitation of women in prostitution (paragraph 10 of the "List of issues and questions"): the number of cases investigated and prosecutions under Law No. 164 of 2011 on Punishment of Human Trafficking Offenses.
- Regarding health (paragraph 19 of the "List of issues and questions"): the number of women who have been held in detention and sentenced for having undergone an abortion in Lebanon within the reporting period, including information on the length of such detention.

There are no statistics or official compiled databases that can be used to provide the aforesaid information. The Ministry of Justice will therefore be requested to provide the requested information.

List of Annexes

Annex 1: Proposed law on a national commission for human rights, including a committee for the prevention of torture.

Annex 2: Decree No. 5734 of 29 September 1994 on the Regulation of the Ministry of Social Affairs.

Annex 3: Law Establishing the National Commission for Lebanese Women (Law No. 720 of 5 November 1998).

Annex 4: Law No. 293 of 7 May 2014 on the Protection of Women and Other Family Members from Domestic Violence.

Annex 5: Tables prepared by the Directorate General of the Internal Security Forces showing human trafficking cases and statistics for 2014 and 2015.

Annex 6: Statistical tables prepared by the General Directorate of General Security showing the number of probable victims who benefited from the "Safe House" according to nationality and the type and treatment of complaints filed by probable victims in 2014.

Annex 7: Statistical table of abortion cases in 2012.

Annex 8: Proposed law on the regulation of the marriage of minors.